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Class 1546

Book 44









SPEECH  
OF  
WILLIAM L. GOGGIN,  
OF BEDFORD,  
ON  
FEDERAL RELATIONS,  
IN THE  
CONVENTION OF VIRGINIA,

ON THE 26TH AND 27TH FEBRUARY, 1861.

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## SPEECH.

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The order of the day, Resolutions touching the relations of the States to each other and to the Union, coming up for consideration, Mr. GOGGIN said:

Mr. President, I should not ask the attention of this body to-day upon the great and important questions which now distract the country, were it not that I feel it to be my duty at this time, to express the views which will govern and control my action here. I have come here as a member of this body to endeavor, in such a manner as may seem proper to myself, to discharge the high, responsible duty which rests upon me, as one of those who have been clothed with the sovereignty and power of my native State. I have not, heretofore, as you will bear me witness, occupied one moment's time and attention of this body, and I assure you, sir, that I now enter upon the performance of this duty, with many misgivings of my capacity to say anything that can be calculated in any degree to reflect even the smallest light upon subjects so momentous as those which not only agitate our own State, but this Union, from one extremity to the other.

I came to this Convention, sir, to act as I may think proper, without pledges and without a platform. That word, of so much party significance, as it is sometimes elsewhere, can have no meaning here, for all those great questions to which some gentlemen seem to have thought it necessary to allude, have, in my judgment, as mere party measures, no connection with the deliberations of this body. I came here, sir, as I said, without pledges. I came, however, with one pledge, and that was—if my past life was to be a guarantee of what I would do here, that I would endeavor to serve my country and my whole country. I need not say to you that I have ever professed an ardent attachment to the Union of these States. I have loved it because of the benefits, as I conceived, which it had conferred upon the greatest, freest, and mightiest people upon the earth. I have enjoyed its blessings, and it was my dearest wish that those blessings might be transmitted to my children and children's children. Yes, sir, that was the wish nearest my heart. I have

lived for it; I have stood by it; I have defended its great interests, and I have ever felt as if I was ready to die with it and perish under its ruins, if perish it must.

Why did the Union first attract my love and attachment? It was not because I had any wish to connect my name, humble as it is, with the interests and destiny of a people so great as ours, and a Union so glorious as this was. No, sir, I loved her in youth, and that attachment sprung from the same source as does that which the young man feels for the object of his first and earliest affections, when she is capable of inspiring that feeling, which I know you and I have felt, Mr. President, not because of any outward attractions so much as because of her purity, her worth and virtue. Such, sir, is the attachment which I have had for this Union.

But, sir, the Union is dissolved. Dissolved; not one, two or three, but some six or seven States have united themselves together to form another Union, called the Union of the Confederate States of the South, while Virginia yet remains a member of the Union, as it is. Then, sir, the question arises here in this condition of things, what position is Virginia to assume? Is she to remain in that Union which has been dismembered—that Union which is lost, as I fear, and lost forever, or is she to unite herself and her destinies with the States of the South in that Union to which I have already referred—or is she to declare her own sovereignty and stand independent as one of the nations, not of the Confederate States, but as an independent nation; Virginia, alone and unconnected with any of the other States of this Union?

Mr. President, actuated by the love and attachment which I have had for the Union, when I saw the evidence before me as it appeared in the political horizon, that the danger which now impends over us was coming upon us, I looked around me and endeavored to find if there was any healing balm for those wounds that had been inflicted upon us, in that Constitution which you and I, Mr. President, upon other occasions have sworn to support. I have looked to the instrument of the Union itself—the Constitution—and I find there a provision for the amendment of that Constitution to remedy any evils under which the country may labor. And, sir, I find that the attention of the people of the whole country has been called to it in the Farewell Address of Washington. I will now call the attention of this body to that language and to the remedy to which I have referred:

“To the efficacy and permanency of your Union, a government for the whole is indispensable. No alliance, however strict between the parts, can be an adequate substitute; they must inevitably experience the infractions and interruptions

which all alliances, in all time, have experienced. Sensible of this momentous truth, you have improved upon your first essay, by the adoption of a Constitution of government better calculated than your former for an intimate Union, and for the efficacious management of your common concerns. This Government, the offspring of our own choice, uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, completely free in its principles, in the distribution of its powers, uniting security with energy, and containing within itself a provision for its own amendment, has a just claim to your confidence and your support. Respect for its authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true liberty. The bases of our political systems, is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government: but the Constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power, and the right of the people to establish government, pre-supposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government."

That was the doctrine which you and I, Mr. President, learned when we were young men. That was the doctrine which some of those around me learned, whose venerable appearance give an imposing dignity to this assembly. I say, sir, that is the doctrine taught me by the language of the Father of his country. Pardon me, then, if I say I rely more upon him than upon the teachings of those of the present day, who discard the sentiments that were uttered by the very men who built up this, the mightiest fabric of free government that ever existed upon the face of the earth.

I will now submit, in connection with the remarks I intend to make, and for the consideration of this Convention, some resolutions, which I have prepared as embodying my views:

*Resolved*, That in view of the provisions of the 5th article of the Constitution of the United States it was eminently wise and proper that the Southern States should, in concert, have proposed amendments to the same, so as to have effectually secured a settlement of the present unhappy difficulties which disturb the peace of the country.

*Resolved*, That it is the duty of Virginia now to invite the coöperation of all the slaveholding States, upon the border, so as to provide measures for their concurrent action hereafter.

*Resolved*, That Virginia is attached to the Union as it was, but that it does not protect her rights as it is—that it becomes her people in Convention assembled to look to every remedy for relief, and then to provide, also, in the event of a failure, for the

future relations she is to occupy, having a due regard to her position as one of the States of the South.

I say, then, in connection with what I have here read, it was my ardent desire, when this controversy was commenced, that an appeal should have been made by the legislatures of all the Southern States, to the Northern States, in Congress assembled; and, sir, under the 5th Article of the Constitution which provides for its own amendment, such proceedings could have been had as would have insured, perhaps, peace, harmony and quite to our country. Now, sir, I respectfully ask the attention of the Convention to the article of the Constitution itself:

“The Congress, whenever two-thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution, or, on the application of the legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing amendments, which, in either case, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three-fourths thereof, as the one or the other mode of ratification may be proposed by the Congress.”

Here then are those printed directions to which he who was first in their hearts, in his last moments, called the attention of the people, when he laid his hand upon them and gave them his parting blessing. Sir, I have been attached to this Union, and if I could make it as it was designed to be by those who instituted it, this day I would fling to the breeze the stars and stripes, and let them float in triumph from the Arostook to the Rio Grande, from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

But, sir, I said that the Union was dissolved. Dissolved how? Not by a trial of the remedies which had been prescribed, in the printed directions to which I have called the attention of the Convention; and I say that there is no warrant in the constitution itself by reason of anything contained in it by which a State has the right to secede from this Union so as to alter the basis of our system.

I will now quote from another distinguished statesman, scarcely less distinguished, indeed, than Washington himself—a statesman who was known as the father of the Constitution. I am not now going into a discussion of the right of secession on the part of any State of the Union. I do not consider that it is necessary to discuss that question now, and I will defer it until the question comes to be considered by the Convention directly. I shall now proceed to quote the opinion of Mr. Madison:

“Should the provisions of the Constitution as here reviewed, be found not to secure the government and rights of the States, against usurpations and abuses on the part of the United States, the final resort within the purview of the Constitution, lies in an

amendment of the Constitution, according to a process applicable by the States.

“And in the event of a failure of every Constitutional resort, and an accumulation of usurpations and abuses, rendering passive obedience and non-resistance a greater evil than resistance and revolution, there can remain but one resort, the last of all; an appeal from the cancelled obligations of the constitutional compact to original rights and the law of self-preservation. This is the *ultima ratio* under all governments, whether consolidated, confederated, or a compound of both; and it cannot be doubted that a single member of the Union, in the extremity supposed, but in that only, would have a right, as an extra and ultra-constitutional right, to make the appeal.”

Now, sir, whose doctrine is that? Who is it that appeals to you in such earnest terms to remember that the Constitution provides for its own amendment? It is that distinguished man whom but to name is to call up a feeling of reverence in the heart of every man in this assembly. James Madison himself has held this language, and he has clothed it in characters almost of living light, so that he who runs may read.

I believe, then, in the doctrine of self-preservation, in the right to defend my life, my liberty, my honor and my property—in the right to defend the life, liberty and property of my wife and children. Yes, sir; it is one of those rights that He who made and fashioned us as we are, has never taken from us; but it is an extra and ultra constitutional right which as a citizen remains with you, because you have the power as one of his creatures to preserve that which He gave you. Then, sir, this is my doctrine. Still, I hold in the highest respect gentlemen around me who maintain a different opinion, and I tell them, sincerely and frankly, as I feel that I believe the doctrine which I maintain leads to the same results and will accomplish the same purpose that they desire. Will you tell me if I hold this doctrine, and proceed to carry it out, that I will be hung as a rebel against the Government? Will you tell me that I am liable to be tried for treason, because I entertain these opinions, which were the doctrines of Washington and Madison? If that makes me a rebel, then they were rebels also. But let me ask gentlemen around me, who hold the opposite opinion, are you not liable to be arrested as traitors also, if you hold the doctrine of secession. I should like to know what better security these secessionists can have than the doctrine of the right of revolution. It was this very doctrine of the right of revolution that brought us through that glorious struggle which gave us our independence, and which made us a great, mighty and a free people—that doctrine upon which I will stand side by side with you in vindication of the

honor, the integrity, the rights and the privileges of this glorious old Commonwealth and of the whole South.

But, sir, I desire to see peace and harmony established in this Confederacy, or this Union as it was; because, as I have said, I loved the Union, I loved it as the proudest heritage that could be bequeathed by parents to their children; I loved it for the glories of its past history—for those names made illustrious by deeds which are emblazoned upon all that is connected with the Revolutionary struggle; I loved it, too, because its fair daughters, those of Massachusetts and those who lived upon the banks of the Connecticut, with their sisters of Virginia, as well as those all over this broad land have bedewed with their tears the shrine at Mount Vernon, have knelt around that hallowed spot and sent up their aspirations together to the Home of the Most High for the welfare and protection of this people.

But Mr. President, if I were to refer to the causes which have produced the present state of things, I should certainly depart from that line which I have thought proper to pursue in this Convention. A reference to the history of the unfortunate difficulties in which we are now involved might call up reminiscences in the minds of some of this body that might be unpleasant to remember. Let us then bury this question as to what causes have produced the present strife, and let us rather act the part of the wise men in the temple who took care of the jewels without stopping to inquire who had applied the torch that produced the conflagration. I say, sir, that all such inquiries and all such allusions as these are irrelevant upon this occasion. Let us come up to the great work before us and endeavor so to discharge our duty here as that we may have the consciousness that we have done all that duty and love of our country required us to do.

In referring, as I shall not, but remembering the causes which have produced this unhappy state of affairs, we cannot but be reminded to-day as we sit in this hall, that Abraham Lincoln is President of the United States, or will be in a few days—to fill the place—once filled by the noble dead. It becomes me here to say, in connection with this painful subject, that I have anticipated better things of Mr. Lincoln than those foreshadowed in the speeches which he has made in his journey to Washington. It becomes me to say, that I knew him well some twelve years since. I am perhaps the only member in this hall, or the only person within the sound of my voice who does know him well. It was my chance, as it was my duty, to serve with him in Congress upon the same committee for two years. Whatever may have been our want of associations in some respect, yet, there is not a gentleman within the sound of my voice—a member of

this or any other deliberative body, who does not know that from the kind of intercourse which exists between the members of a committee of any legislative assemblage, each is able to judge somewhat, not only of the strength of intellect, but of the character and qualities of mind which those associated with him may possess. Well, sir, I say—and I think it is due to him that I should say it—that I regarded Mr. Lincoln as industrious and attentive to his duties—a man of fair talents, which I have no doubt he employed to the satisfaction and interests of his constituents; I will say farther, that there was no man upon that committee who worked with more diligence or who more faithfully discharged his duties; and he argued with great ability many of the complicated questions which arose for discussion. I have said this of him as I have said it upon other occasions, and however much I may have deprecated his election as one of the greatest evils which could befall the country, and however much I strove to avert that evil, yet I have spoken of him and of my acquaintance with him, as I would of any other individual with whom my business associations had made me acquainted. But, sir, I must say, if the accounts which I read of his speeches since he set out upon his journey from Springfield to Washington be correct, that I was deceived in the character, the pretensions, the abilities and the strength of intellect of Abraham Lincoln. It is revolting to every sense of propriety, that a man, elevated to so distinguished a station as this, should have made the exhibition which he has of himself, at every station and at every point where he has been called upon to address his fellow-citizens. I had supposed, from my estimate of his character, that he would at least have had that sort of knowledge of himself, and of those around him, as would have induced him to keep silent, but I must confess now, that I have not even the hope of his silence in the future, and I am almost ready to say, not even the hope of his forbearance.

When we contemplate the fact, as it is, that he is President of the United States, elected as he was upon a sectional platform, with these questions distracting and disturbing the country as they do, the inquiry may very properly be made, where is Virginia to go? As I said a while since, I do not now propose to discuss the question of that peculiar doctrine entertained by some in regard to the right of secession. The evil is near upon us, and the question presented to our minds now is, what shall be the course of this old Commonwealth of ours? I might here say, in connection with the remarks in relation to Mr. Lincoln, that he is not the only man about the City of Washington who, at this time, seems to have been possessed of a strange sort of hallucination, that there was danger of force being used by Virginia and Maryland, to prevent his inau-

guration. But I do not believe that there is within the broad limits of this Commonwealth, a man who is entitled to the claim of ordinary intelligence, who has entertained the idea of preventing the inauguration of Lincoln by force. While Virginia, then, has entertained no such thought, she can never fail to remember that the 4th of March is in the calendar, and that it is a day which has called forth, unhappily for us, the exercise of that power, which belongs to the Government of calling to its aid and service her own war-worn veteran and soldier, Virginia's own son, whom the State of Virginia has deemed worthy of her thanks, and as worthy to wear a sword—patriotic as I believe him to be, and as honest as his purposes were—it is unfortunate, in the distracted state of affairs as they exist at this time, that Gen. Scott was called to the City of Washington to direct the operations of a military force on such an occasion. I will pledge to Abraham Lincoln my right hand, that there is not a man within the limits of this State who intends to prevent by force his inauguration. Then, I say, it was unfortunate that this thing should have been done—to add excitement to that which already existed.

I only say, sir, in relation to the subject, as I am now speaking in reference to that particular point, that while no such thing is contemplated, and no such purpose is entertained, yet whenever the power of that army in Washington or elsewhere is brought to bear upon this Commonwealth under the guise of executing the laws by force in opposition to the will of this people, all the sympathies of this Convention will be aroused for the honor of the State, and they will stand here united as one man. I say here, if any coercion were attempted to be used upon this subject, while this State was deliberating, if any force were to be applied so as to attempt to overawe our deliberations, either directly or indirectly, there is not a man, I believe, in this Convention, who would not feel that his own rights were assailed. I do not care what you may say about the theory that the Government must execute its laws. I say that when a great and free people, as we are, are deliberating upon a question of life or death, we do not intend to stand by and see our rights trampled upon under the pretext that the Government has the power to do so under the Constitution of the United States.

But we are to be reconciled, as we are told by some gentlemen, and we are to go out of this Union upon the idea that we are to be taken care of in the Southern Confederacy. How is this thing to be accomplished? I now approach this subject in no spirit of captiousness—I make no allusion to those gentlemen, who but a few days since addressed this Convention in a manner that must have been acceptable to every one who heard their arguments, however much any gentleman here may have differed



from them. They came here clothed with an authority which we were bound to respect, and for their gentlemanly deportment and bearing which they exhibited here and every where in their intercourse with Virginians, I will say, that whatever destiny awaits me, whether I am to be separated from them or united with them, I shall ever entertain for them the highest respect.

I ask you whether the argument which has been addressed to you from other quarters is one which is to be adopted without grave and serious consideration. Go at once and without inquiry into a confederacy of the South! What is the argument which gentlemen bring to sustain it? They set out with the proposition, that a people, to be free and to maintain their rights and liberties in all time, must have the same interests, and that there must be a sort of homogeneousness in the population. What is the argument in favor of this idea? They tell you that all the slave labor will be required to cultivate the cotton of the South, and when they have taken the slave by the hand and carried him to a Southern market, with the other hand they would supply his place with the Yankee. That is the argument which has been employed by some of those who advocate a Southern Confederacy. Does not the argument destroy itself? They have not told us, in all the arguments addressed to us, that the people whom they propose to bring here are not congenial, in their disposition and nature, to the people of the South. What, sir, reconcile Virginia to this process, which they propose to inaugurate, and by which all our slave labor is to be carried off, and at the same time tell us, in order to keep our slaves as our property, and prevent them from going over the border, it will be necessary to establish a line of military posts all along the banks of the Ohio river. Is this the argument that is to be addressed to Virginians? Excuse me, Mr. President, and gentlemen of the Convention, if I cannot appreciate an argument of this sort.

Have we not been solemnly warned by some of our wisest statesmen to be jealous of these standing armies? We are told that it is to be the destiny of this great State; that in one alternative your property is to be protected by the confederated States establishing upon your borders a line of military posts, and lest that argument might not avail, they then tell you that in process of time your whole State will be depleted of its slaves. Cotton, they have told us, is King; but when they have tauntingly proclaimed it—I make no reference to the Commissioners—have they told us how long his Majesty will remain upon the throne? While they have proclaimed that cotton was King, they have altogether failed to tell us that King Cotton has a rival, and a mighty rival, too, elsewhere. They have failed to tell us that the empire of Great Britain—“a power to which, for purposes  
“ of conquest and subjugation, Rome, in the height of her

“glory is not to be compared—a power which has dotted the surface of the globe all over with her military possessions, and whose morning drum beat, following the sun, and keeping time with the hours, circles the earth daily with one continuous sound and strain with her martial airs;” they have failed to tell us that this mighty power, which never makes a treaty without regard to her own interests, has now extended her acquisitions and made treaties with nations that can supply this article of cotton.

I want to call the attention of the Convention, for a moment, while upon this subject, to some statistics which I have in reference to it, and which have an important bearing upon the great interests of the State of Virginia, and more particularly the interests of the South, so far as the cotton question is concerned. These statistics go to show that Great Britain produces annually of manufactured articles from this raw material, in the shape of cotton cloth, two thousand millions of yards. How much of this do you suppose comes to the United States? She sends here 177,000,000 of yards, while she sends to her East Indian colonies 500,000,000 of yards, or one quarter of the whole amount she makes. Now, sir, is it to be supposed, when she has established her empire in India, when she has placed her foot upon the Celestial Empire, and where, by the force of her arms, she is about to make the people of the sun contribute to the support of her manufactures in Manchester—that she is a proper guardian for the interests of Southern men and Southern rights and Southern institutions? How, sir, will the English Government extend her fostering care over the Southern Confederacy? A nation, permit me to say, with all the kindly feelings which I have towards it, as has been said by some writer upon the subject, will always make good her record upon the abolition of slavery throughout the world as in her own colonies. As to the opinion which she holds upon that subject, you need but refer to the account as published in the papers of the treatment extended to Mr. Dallas, our Minister to England, some little time since, at a public entertainment, one, to whose kindness, courtesy, integrity and great worth as a private citizen and as a public man, some gentlemen I see before me can bear witness from their intercourse with him. In his venerable appearance, even more remarkable than any man I see in this assemblage, he was made to feel in the presence of the representatives of the crowned heads of Europe, that he was the representative of a Government where the institution of slavery existed, and which their Wilberforce had held up to the reprobation of the world. Will you talk to me, then, about the South looking to England for aid in her attempt to establish a Southern Confederacy?

I see before me a gentleman from the city of Petersburg, (Mr.

Branch,) and I know he will excuse me for calling his attention for one moment to that grave interest with which he has some acquaintance. Let me ask this gentleman, and other gentlemen of the Convention, who are interested in the culture of the article of tobacco, whether they can expect any sympathy from England, in any aid she may extend towards this article of commerce? Let me tell you that that mother country, England, whose protection is to be invoked for the South, levies the enormous amount of 800 per cent. upon this article, before it goes into the mouth of the consumer.

I would speak here, sir, of another great interest of Virginia, which is represented by a friend who sits near me, (Mr. Caperton.) But before I do so, permit me to say, that until within a few years past, but a few months, I should say, I had a very inadequate conception of the power, wealth and influence of this glorious old Commonwealth of Virginia. Familiar as I was with her history, and with her growth and advance in all that makes a great State, I did not dream that Virginia had such resources as she has, and I feel prouder of her now than before—proud that I can call her mother; and, sir, as was eloquently said by my colleague upon the other side of the house, “her destiny shall be my destiny, where she goes, I will go; and if I perish, I will perish only upon her bosom, and be buried with her.”

But, sir, I was about to refer to another interest—an interest not peculiar to the county which you represent, Mr. President, but to many other counties of the Commonwealth, and the East as well as the West. I allude to the staple of wheat; and then, too, there is an immense stock grazing county in Virginia, to which I referred. Are these interests to be disregarded under the assumption that Cotton is King and that everything else must bow with bended knee before it? I want tobacco, wheat and the interests of a grazing country to receive consideration in this grave question of what is to be the destiny of this people? Are you to be told that your stock, your cattle, wheat and tobacco, which you have taken from your farms, in whatever form it may be, cannot enter the ports of Boston, Philadelphia or New York, because we have made them aliens and strangers to us? I ask you if Virginia would not place herself in a predicament she little dreams of at present, that would affect her most material interest, when she determines to go out of this Union, without due deliberation. I want the Union as it was or as it was designed to be, that gives me the happiness and the privilege of going anywhere within its broad limits without a passport. I want a Union that has sympathy with my rights and my interest. I want a Union that will protect my industry; I do not mean protect it by the imposition of duties, but which will allow that intercourse which should exist between every member of

this Confederacy, by which I can exchange, without reference to duties, my commodities for those which other people have to spare.

But, sir, I cannot dwell upon a subject of so much moment, because I shall consume more time than I had allotted to myself when I commenced my remarks. As I see some gentlemen before me who are capable of answering some of the questions I have put, let me ask them, if we are at once to go out of this Union without any regard to the North, and our affections are to be concentrated upon the South—tell me, how is Virginia to get there? Some gentlemen tell us that they would not wait a moment—that Virginia must go now, now. How will she get to Montgomery, Alabama? Are you to negotiate for a transit route across North Carolina and Tennessee? Kentucky and Tennessee have not gone out, and I think that one of those States has determined that she will not go out. Suppose, Mr. President, when you go home you tell your constituents that we have made a government by which Virginia is to become a part of the Confederate States of the South, and they ask you—“how, Mr. Janney, are you to get there?” Why, sir, you could not answer the question. You could not, as a statesman, go home and tell your people that you had taken the chances of North Carolina following your lead. If we could negotiate and get through Tennessee and North Carolina, how are we to pass the frowning battlements of Fortress Monroe and the Rip-Raps? It is true we should claim them—they must go where Virginia goes. Suppose that you should pass them in safety—these forts that belong now to the Government of the United States—are you to pursue a winding course along the coast of North Carolina, and to land at Charleston? Why, sir, those pilots down about Elizabeth City would tell you that they could not take your vessel into the port of Charleston, until Charleston has her lights up. They will tell you that she has virtually blockaded her own ports against her own commerce, and the commerce of the world. Will your vessel land in Savannah? She might, but, sir, you would encounter these fleets of the North. They would then be strangers to us, though they may have been our national allies in times past. Can we go through North Carolina and Tennessee to get to the Capital of the South? I want gentlemen to answer me this question. Sir, all these difficulties may be accommodated by the policy of a conference of the border slave States which my proposition suggests. That is the way in which to treat our equals of the border States. If there is anything that could be calculated to throw obstacles in the way of an adjustment of the difficulties which would be likely to arise with North Carolina and Tennessee, they should be first adjusted.

It would seem to be the impression of some gentlemen here that, when Virginia shall go, North Carolina and Tennessee will follow. I know, sir, the people of these States well, and I tell you that if there is anything above another that they dislike, it is the assumption of any superiority on the part of Virginia over them. I claim that they are our equals—I mean the States of North Carolina and Tennessee. They are the equals of Virginia in this Union, her equals in the matter of State rights and State principles. I claim this for these States; I claim it, sir, for the smallest States; I claim it for the States of Delaware and Maryland—smaller though they be, in the area of square miles only.

And here, sir, I will observe that I saw the other day in a newspaper an article which brought to my mind some remarks which I heard repeated elsewhere. It relates to the elements which constitute a State, and the question was asked and answered.

“WHAT CONSTITUTES A STATE?”

“Not high raised battlements, labored mound,  
Thick wall or moated gate;  
Not cities, proud with spires and turrets crowned;  
Not bays and broad armed ports,  
Where, laughing at the storm, rich navies ride;  
Not starred and spangled courts,  
Where low bred baseness wafes perfume to pride;  
No, men—high minded men—  
With powers as far above dull brutes induced,  
In forest brake or den,  
As beasts excel cold rocks or brambles rude;  
Men, who their duties know,  
But know their rights, and knowing, dare maintain,  
Prevent the long aimed blow,  
And crush the tyrant while they rend the chain.  
These constitute a State  
And Sovereign law, that State's collected will,  
O'er thrones and globes elate,  
Sits Empress, crowning good, repressing ill.”

These, sir, are the elements of true greatness in States. Then, if you proceed upon the assumption of superiority for Virginia over any other State in this Union, by determining that you will go out without consulting them, you destroy the best opportunity that could be afforded for adjusting one of the most unfortunate difficulties that has ever existed.

Then, sir, I say that I am for a consultation with the border States of the South. There we can take steps to form and propose our own Constitution and secure to ourselves our own sacred rights of persons and property. If six States of the South had a right to act; if they have a right to meet at Montgomery and adopt a Constitution which they say is alone to govern them—have we not a right, in like manner, to consult together

in the City of Lexington in relation to our rights, and to propose a Constitution also? And ask them to adopt it? I have no idea myself, sir, of being compelled to go anywhere. I will only consent to go where my interest lies, and my duty and honor requires me to go. If Mr. Lincoln should tell me that I would be compelled to yield unqualified obedience to him, I would point him to that proud flag which now floats over this hall—a flag which has upon one side a shield, and a virgin upon the other. The purity of the one, and the strength and durability of the other, will be ever sufficient to inspire respect and to protect every citizen of Virginia, native or adopted, against any coercive policy that Abraham Lincoln may attempt. We, sir, should feel a perfect sense of security in our own strength, although we should hear the notes of the muffled drum that marked the tread of those who came to call us to execution.

Notwithstanding this power and position which all will be ready to concede that Virginia possesses—notwithstanding her great resources—I ask you if she is to precipitate herself into a connection with her sister States of the South, upon the idea that they alone hold interests in common with us? Do you know that you would be welcomed? Do you know, although it is proposed that you should unite with the seceded States, that you would be received with that kindness and cordiality which every Virginian would expect to meet when he went into the house of his friend? It has been the practice of gentlemen here, to read newspaper extracts to sustain their arguments. I trust that I may be permitted to do so, though I confess that, as a general thing, these extracts do not convey any decided proof of the facts which they undertake to treat upon.

I will, however, read for the information of this Convention, an article from the *Charleston Mercury*, which is regarded as the organ of the Southern States, at least of the State of South Carolina.

Speaking of Virginia, the *Mercury* says:

“She is completely demoralized in the estimation of the South; and no Southern State, intent on vindicating her rights and preserving her institutions, would go into a conference with her. She has placed the Union above the rights and institutions of the South, and will only seek a conference with the Southern States in order to bring them down to the level of her fatal Union policy. Virginia and the other frontier States may as well at once understand their position with the cotton States. They are not expected to aid the cotton States in protecting themselves and redeeming their liberties. They will practically aid the Northern States in attempting to obtain in the South an acquiescence in the rule of abolitionists at Washington. The Southern States, however, will disregard their counsels. They want *no conference*

*but in the Convention which will assemble to frame the Constitution, and complete the organization of a Southern Confederacy. They intend to secede from the Union, and construct a Union among themselves."*

This is the language of one of the leading journals of one of the leading States of the confederated Republic of the South. These were the sentiments then entertained by those who were a part and parcel of the State. I will not say that they were the sentiments of those gentlemen who appeared before this Convention, for the frankness and courtesy which marked the demeanor of those gentlemen, and the character for sincerity to which they are entitled would repel any such idea.

But, sir, should we go into that Southern confederated nation, can anybody tell us how long we are to remain there? They tell you that the Government at Montgomery has adopted a temporary Constitution or form of Government. Has it attracted the attention of those around me that that very Constitution has laid the foundation for an interminable strife in relation to this very question which is the subject matter of dispute here. The Constitution of these confederated States of the South, as I understand, provides that their Congress shall have the power to regulate the slave trade, and the power is reserved by Congress to forbid it altogether as between the Southern Confederacy and any of the States not now members of it. The very thing against which we have been contending, as one of the powers of this General Government, of which we are members, is to be incorporated into the Constitution of this new Union of the South. I ask, under this view of the case, if we are to rush out of this Union, in hot haste, without knowing where we are to go? I would hope not. I love the Union, not as it is, but as it was, and as it was designed to be, and I would try and have the abuses, of which we all complain, corrected. We must have the assurance of the North to that effect, and they must give us security for the future, if they cannot give us indemnity for the past. How, then, is such a result to be accomplished? Let the border States make a Constitution which shall protect their property in all time, present it as their plan, and then invite all the States of this Union to come and unite with them in its adoption—invite all—stop not at the Hudson, as some gentlemen would do. I say I would invite all, but they must come in upon the terms which we prescribe, but with nothing exacted of them which is not fair and proper in itself.

But gentlemen talk about a diversity of interests as being irreconcilable to such an union. Why, sir, the philosophy of British statesmen has long since shown that a diversity of interests in a great republic or a great nation is what makes a people great and mighty. I do not mean a diversity of purpose in regard to a pe-

culiar institution, such as slavery, but in reference to other interests such as those with which Virginia is connected as one of the members of this Union, in connexion with national resources and power. There cannot be in all respects an identity of interests. There are diversities in this regard in families, in countries, in States and in nations. And let me ask, because of diversities in the social or political system, would you, therefore, make this an argument against the system itself? Why, sir, carry out such an idea, and you would destroy everything that you hold near and dear, and you would destroy many of the relations that you now hold most sacred. Such a feeling that a diversity of interests could not exist here when applied to our State, to the interests of the East and the West, would be calculated, above all things, to stir up strife, and that kind of feeling which should not exist between the citizens of the same State, having the same common destiny. I am sure no such feeling exists between the East and the West. I would be no more willing to part with Maryland, with Western Virginia, with Kentucky, with Tennessee or North Carolina, than I would be willing to part with any dear and honored friend who had accompanied me thus far along the journey of life, and to whom I had been indebted for the many good courtesies which had strewn blessings in my path—with the sons of the West I will never part.

I was proceeding to say something of the provisional government of the South, and I would ask what assurance is there that such provisional government is to remain the government of the Confederate States of the South? Is it not a government that is only temporarily established? Have these gentlemen in the South, who complain of the North, and rightfully complain, too—a complaint which I do not stand here to except to—ever asked themselves the question whether they have always been true to the interest of Virginia, true to that Constitution which these gentlemen tell us in this confederated republic of the South gives assurance to the people of Virginia, that her rights in all time are to be protected? Have they been under this Constitution, and the laws made in pursuance of it, faithful in their observance? In defiance of the allied navies of England and France and our own country, although we have a law here against the importation of Africans from abroad, we have found that they have been landed upon Southern soil, and we have found that this law, written upon the statute book; almost with letters of blood, and with the severest penalties attached to it, that could be inflicted, has been violated, and that when juries have been found unwilling to convict, judges had it not in their power to punish.

Let me ask, is Virginia to be secured against such violations



of law by the making of a new confederated Southern Republic, when she has not been able to protect her rights upon this great and vital question? We have already been informed that this was one of the great subjects for discussion—one of the great interests which was to be looked after in future—the reëopening of the African slave trade. I ask gentlemen around me, when we get into the confederated Union of the South, and when Virginia, with the other Border States, will be as five to nine, I ask if it be not in the power of that confederated Union of the South, to alter that Constitution, though she has told us by her temporary government that the slave trade is to be prohibited? Will not their interest lead them to go to the market where they can buy the cheapest and where they can sell the dearest? Have not these gentlemen always preached this doctrine and called our attention to it? Where, let me ask, is the market wherein you can buy the cheapest? It is in the valley of the Congo; and the market wherein you can sell the dearest, in the valley of the Mississippi. With these competing forces by which we are surrounded, with a cordon of free States here upon one side, and a repelling force upon the other, Virginia will be placed in a position to perform the office of a baggage master upon a railway train, who has no interest in the general luggage, except to perform the bidding of those who employ him. Virginia is to stand here, as we are told, and help the South to repel the forces of the North. She is to stand guard at the military posts on her borders, to watch the interests of the South. She is to perform this duty as an agent for the benefit of others, at the instance, as they tell us, of the confederated States of the South.

Let me present the question in another point of view. After referring to the reëopening of the African slave trade, and the competition which must necessarily be induced by the reëopening of that trade, let me ask, in all candor, how is the security of Virginia to be promoted? How is it to be promoted by bringing Canada to the border?

I have already indicated to you what my course in the outset would have been—that I would have asked these people of the North to have met Virginia in consultation, as provided by the 5th article of the Constitution. If they had not responded to the invitation, and the slave States had sent their Commissioners to this Convention and proposed amendments to the Constitution, how would you stand? The invitation being extended to, and not responded to by the North, the whole South would to-day stand upon the vantage ground, and the very fact of the North having refused, would have rendered us in the South united, and, therefore, invincible. You would have presented here to-day the great, high and noble moral spectacle to the world, not

of a divided people, but of a people united everywhere, from the banks of the Ohio to the capes of Florida. If the demand which we would unitedly make, should be withheld from us, after we asked the North, in the manner and form pointed out by the Constitution, Virginia would not present those divisions in her councils which it is manifest now exist. Moreover, this unity of sentiment on her part would have restored peace and confidence long since, instead of the general uncertainty which now prevails.

I believe in the coöperation of the border slave States now, as I have believed from the beginning, and do now believe in the coöperation of all the States with them, when we make the plan our own and invite them to participate. But, as I said before, that coöperation must be accomplished upon a plan that is right and just to all the States. If the seceded States have coöperated among themselves, I ask whether we should not assemble together and determine whether Virginia will go off alone, or whether we will take into our company the States of North Carolina and Tennessee and the other border slave States? Tell me not that there is no time now to talk about this thing; that the time for action has arrived. The time for action? How? Why, sir, as I have endeavored to show, the month of March is no more in the calendar, so far as the application of any force to our deliberations by the Government is concerned, than the month of May last. The mere accession of Lincoln to power cannot and ought not precipitate our deliberations here. If it were necessary, to accomplish a good, to restore the Union, we might deliberate here day after day until the 4th of March, 1862, without being affected by any apprehensions of force or disturbance through the agency of the Federal Government, if Mr. Lincoln's advisers are to be heard, or if Mr. Buchanan is to be believed. I have no idea of being hurried into revolution, however promptly I would wish to act under any influence of this sort. The fact that Mr. Lincoln will be President of the United States, while it may enter our minds and form part of our deliberations, has nothing to do with precipitating our action, unless he should indicate at once a line of coercive policy. No, sir; and I will here observe, that a singular coincidence of opinion exists between certain gentlemen who are in favor of precipitate action and the great high priest of freesoilism, in reference to the probability of hostilities. I merely refer to this in order to disabuse the public mind of an idea that seems to have taken hold of it, that there is danger of an attempt to coerce the Cotton States. These States being now united, I insist that they cannot be forced into submission, and that an attempt to coerce them must not be made. Five millions of people, of whom nearly one-third, if not more, are able and willing to shoulder

their muskets, can never be subjugated while fighting round their hearth stones. If eight States, having five millions of people, choose to separate from us, they cannot be prevented or withheld from so doing by coercion. Why, sir, those who had never seen the article to which I shall now call the attention of the Convention, would suppose that it emanated from one of the most decided secessionists within the sound of my voice. But it is the doctrine and declaration of Horace Greeley himself. It is the language which that philosopher and editor employs, and which he puts into his journal, which is read by his 500,000 followers.

He tells you that an attempt to coerce five millions of men is preposterous and absurd, and that it can never be done.

Horace Greeley says:—"But if the Cotton States generally unite with her in seceding, *we insist that they cannot be prevented, and that the attempt must not be made.* Five millions of people, more than half of them of the dominant race, of whom at least half a million are able and willing to shoulder muskets, *can never be subdued while fighting around and over their own hearth-stones.*"

Mr. MORRIS—What is the date of the paper in which that extract appeared?

Mr. GOGGIN—I think the paper containing it was published in November last. I don't pretend to know, nor have I undertaken to ascertain what are Greeley's opinions now. Whatever they are, I am prepared to say to my friend from Orange (Mr. MORRIS) that they are bad enough. I merely refer to his opinions as given in this extract to show what the sentiment was among the party, of which this paper is the organ, at the time it was written. It was then, I felt assured, a correct opinion, however much its author may vary from it now, under the force of expediency or party obligations. I have very little faith in him, and very little faith in the sincerity or consistency of any of those who minister round the altar of the political fanaticism that prevails at the North.

But, sir, apart from this authority, we have before us the fact that the administration that is just going out of power has distinctly stated that it had no power to coerce a State. I have seen it stated that Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Buchanan have had an interview recently in the city of Washington, but whether they entertain the same opinion on this question of coercion, I am unable to say. That will doubtless soon be ascertained. I am satisfied that the feeling which animates every member of this Convention, is that with the power which belongs to Georgia, and the other States associated with her in the new Confederacy, that neither Lincoln, nor Mr. Buchanan, nor any other President, will attempt to coerce them into obedience. As was very

well said by a friend of mine the other day, upon this floor, whatever may be our opinion as to the course of Virginia on the question of secession, she should be prepared for any emergency. I would tell the Convention in any event to prepare for action, because whatever difference of opinion may exist, this consideration should be, as I have no doubt it is, paramount. Differences of opinion should pass away in view of this necessity like chaff before the morning wind.

WEDNESDAY, February 27.

The President having announced that the unfinished business was in order,

Mr. GOGGIN said:—Mr. President, I feel very much indebted for the kindness and courtesy of the Convention, in having adjourned over as it did yesterday, and to have thus given me an opportunity of resuming the remarks which I had not concluded when the Convention adjourned.

Before I proceed, sir, to say what I design to say upon this occasion, I think it proper to express my thanks also to the reporters of this body, who have in the main so very accurately reported the remarks which I had the honor to present to the Convention on yesterday. The general accuracy of the report, I think, is unquestionable. From sheer inability on my part, however, to make myself fully audible to the reporter, I find that there are some inaccuracies, unintentional, I have no doubt, and which could not have been avoided; but I do not propose now, however, to detain the Convention by any reference to them.

On yesterday, sir, I presented in such a manner as I was enabled to do, some views which to my mind were important in connection with the grave subjects which now distract the country. It is proper to say that, in presenting these views, I did so in no partisan sense or with any purpose on my part to present views as embodying the sentiments upon which I may act when called upon to do so, if a state of things different from that now existing, should arise in the country. An erroneous impression seems to have prevailed in the minds of many in this Convention, and out of it, that it is the duty of the members of this body, like advocates at the bar, to support some particular view of the cause of a client as presented by the testimony, or, like a candidate on the hustings, seeking the suffrages of the people, to come here and maintain some fixed principle of action without regard to events and circumstances, which are now of almost hourly occurrence. For my part, sir, I came with no feelings in my heart other than those which look alone to the maintenance of the honor of Virginia, and to the peace and prosperity of the country at large. As I said yesterday, I deem it my duty not to advocate any particular line of policy,

but to endeavor to do what, under the circumstances, I might deem right and proper for the safety, the security, the prosperity and the happiness of this old Commonwealth; and in looking to that, sir, I felt that it was my duty also to look abroad and contemplate in the efforts which I should make here, the happiness and the prosperity of the whole country, of which the Commonwealth is part.

I have thought it right, sir, to do what I presume every gentleman in the Convention has in view, to endeavor to impress upon the minds of men, reflections for argument, by presenting the particular views which may strike them as best calculated to accomplish what is for the interests of all; then by a comparison of views to elicit the fullest information on the questions which we are assembled here to discuss.

That, sir, has been my purpose; and I would have it remembered by this Convention, sir, and by the country, that we come not here for the sake or purpose of making a constitutional government, or to adopt measures that are to bind the people of the State of Virginia. We sit here, as I understand, as that committee of twenty one (the Committee on Federal Relations) does in another room of this building, to compare opinions, to advise and consult with each other, and then to present to the great council at home the result of our deliberations, that those who sent us here may ratify or reject it, as they think proper.

That is what I understand to be my duty, and I don't intend to be driven from it by any impression that may have been made in the minds of any one—that I came here as the advocate of any particular line of policy or any particular school of politicians. I shall endeavor, sir, to do, as I have no doubt every member of this Convention will do—to act strictly in accordance with circumstances as they probably may soon be developed to us.

I have said, sir, that I have been the friend of the Union, that I stood among those who believed that the Union was the true palladium of our liberty and of our prosperity: but I have indicated also, sir, at least I so intended, that whatever may be my devotion, respect and admiration of this Union, as it was, whenever the time comes for Virginia no longer to be a part of that Union—if it shall come, when, having calmly and deliberately considered these disturbing topics which now distract the country, she shall determine that she will not remain, nor be a part of that Union, I would not only go where she goes, but I would be one of those that would lead her to where I believe it would be her duty to go. That, sir, I mean to do; and it is useless to tell me that it is expected that I am to pursue this or that course. I shall pursue the course, sir, which my conscience tells me is the course of the patriot and not of the mere partizan.

I endeavored yesterday to present some references to the subject of the relations which the State of Virginia holds towards the other States of this Union, and the relations in which she may stand to the seceding States in particular, in a commercial aspect, and as it respects the effects to be produced by the circumstances or relations which have existed for so many years—years, in fact, which have established a course of trade in which Virginia has an interest peculiar to herself as a border State.

Before proceeding to offer a few additional remarks upon the same subject, I will state again that I came into this body with a desire for peace, with a desire for harmony; but I say to you now, and to this Convention, that when the remedies to which we shall resort, and which I think are yet within our control, shall have failed to give relief, I shall stand by my friend whom I see before me from the county of Greenville, (Mr. CHAMBLISS,) and who holds opinions in many respects, opposed to those which I entertain. But while I say this, sir, I say it is not my purpose to sustain, before this body, any fixed or foregone conclusion upon the subject of secession or any other policy. I said, yesterday, that there were reasons, that there were facts, that there were circumstances connected with those Confederate States of the South, in the new position which they occupy, that should cause us to pause and consider well before we should cause Virginia to take her stand with those States, though that may be her post of duty and of honor at last.

Sir, this morning I was enabled to avail myself of some important information concerning the products of the State of Virginia, which may serve here as a source of some instruction, however little it may be, in the consideration of the subjects of Virginia's interests in her relations to the Southern or Cotton States, as well as to others. I shall not, in referring to this subject, dwell particularly upon the resources of the tide-water country, or of the middle country, or of the western country. I shall content myself with some very general views with regard to one of the leading products of Virginia, and the influences likely to be exercised upon it by the present and prospective changes in our relations to others. I beg gentlemen to reflect upon the facts which I shall submit to them before they decide to act. I ask them to examine the heavy stakes involved to the tide-water region of Virginia—to the ports of Richmond, Petersburg and Norfolk, and other points, before taking any precipitate action. You will find that there is a great and powerful interest in Virginia that requires your consideration, and I will briefly bring your attention to it, without any elaborate argument at all. Having no familiarity with the subject of commerce, I will leave to others more competent than I am, the duty of dealing with it

in fuller detail than it is my purpose to refer to it now. I said, with reference to the products of our State, that I represented a peculiar interest, and that, in fact, the interests of the whole State were, in some respect, unlike others in that regard. Her interests are diversified. She appeals to no king cotton; she appeals to no particular trade; she appeals to no particular interest to decide her destiny, as do the other States of the South, the Cotton States in particular. She, like a good mother as she is, embraces all her children. She looks around her, to the East and West, and considers alike the good and the welfare of all. As one of those representing all the great natural, mechanical and commercial, as well as manufacturing resources of Virginia, I will state that, while I am more immediately concerned in the welfare of particular branches of industry, I shall not be governed by any mere local influences in the course which I may pursue in this Convention. I will produce a few facts in connection with this interest.

I find, upon examination of an article, for which I am indebted to one who occupies an official position in this body—one, sir, to whom the State of Virginia perhaps is more indebted than to any other man in the Commonwealth, for having, from time to time, made such an exhibit in his annual, semi-annual and quarterly reports of the resources of the trade of Virginia, as serves to enlighten her people and inform them correctly of statistical facts connected with their material interests—the one to whom I allude as the compiler of these tables is the gentleman who occupies a seat on your right, (Mr. John Græme, Assistant Clerk.) The facts to which I refer show that the export of tobacco from the port of Richmond alone, to foreign ports, for the year 1860, were 18,798 hogsheads, of which Liverpool took 2,389 hogsheads, and London 2,461; while the total amount of leaf and stems to the Northern ports, to Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York by steamers alone, was 7,170 hogsheads. To this is to be added a still larger item of 275,275 boxes and packages of manufactured tobacco sent to these ports, besides exports from the Dock of 60,820 packages—the whole amounting to 336,095 packages, the valuation upon which, at \$25 per package, which I am enabled to make from other sources of information, would be \$16,804,750, or nearly \$17,000,000—I say nothing of the millions besides, cleared from Petersburg, &c.

Now, sir, tell me that this great interest is of no concern to the people of the State of Virginia, because Cotton has installed itself King in another portion of this Republic as it was. I say, sir, that I cannot be driven from the consideration at least of the subject by the arguments of gentlemen, however ingeniously they may be applied. I say nothing of what may have gone

from your port, sir, (addressing himself to Mr. Branch, of Petersburg,) or what may have gone from other ports. The statistics which I present, however, will be sufficient to give some idea of the great stake which Virginia has in this particular interest. From this it will be seen that these ports of the North are large purchasers of one of our great staples, and that it is by no means the interest of Virginia to cut off these people from all connection with us. If this alienation should occur, where is Virginia to find an equivalent market for this article? I ask my friend from the county of Orange, (Mr. Morton,) who represents a tobacco interest with myself, whether he will readily yield to the cutting off of these ports or not? But, knowing him as I do, I know that, however he may act in this matter, he will do what he believes to be for the best interests of his people and of the whole State. It may be argued that much of the seventeen millions made goes to the ports of the South from New York—but still the importance of the trade, capital and business is shown, and the ports of the North are still shown to be directly connected with the prosperity of the country.

But, sir, in connection with this subject, I want this Convention, I want the State of Virginia to understand, that if she goes out of this Union, if she determines upon any policy, it should be such a policy as would forever settle these difficulties. I want the people of Virginia to know, when they leave this Union, that they are to contract an alliance which is to give them that security which they have failed to find in the Union in which they were, as the Union now is. Gentlemen talk about extracts from newspapers as furnishing no reliable information. Why, sir, as I said yesterday, how are we to obtain information on any subject, unless through the medium of the press? We have heard it frequently designated as another palladium of our liberty; and yet we have heard it said that an extract from a journal is worthless; that it is no authority as to matters of fact. I think that newspaper authority is entitled to the consideration of this Convention, especially when it is found to be one of the leading papers of the country, and one which reflects the general sentiment of the State and section in which it is published. I refer to the *Charleston Mercury*, and that paper has, within the last few days, used the following language:

“We admit that the Government is but provisional and temporary, and that, therefore, the features objected to may not be carried into the permanent Government, *and probably were never intended to be carried there. They were doubtless intended to conciliate the border slave States*; and induce them to an early union. But the concern we have expressed was not unwarrantable. It may be questionable whether, should the border slave States be induced to union by such attractive features of the



Constitution, it would be proper to propose a change. It is to be doubted whether, when they shall have entered, it will be possible for the cotton States to make any changes to which they may object; and, as we would certainly lament the final adoption of the policy objected to, as we would lament a constitutional recognition of a protective policy and a constitutional brand upon the institution of domestic slavery, we think it eminently important that those who deprecate those measures should make the efforts necessary to defeat them."

Here, sir, we have it directly from that journal, that those men at the South who entertain certain opinions on the question of Government, which they would have us adopt, merely because they have embodied in their provisional Constitution a clause prohibiting the African slave trade, defer to our prejudices and interests to the extent of adopting that clause with a view to expunge it after they should have secured our coöperation in their new scheme of government. To be sure, this clause constitutes a very attractive element in the Constitution; but it is declared that this new Congress shall have certain powers over the subject of slavery; and who may not fear but that the prohibitory clause, in relation to the African slave trade, which, as the *Mercury* states, was embodied in the Constitution merely to induce the Border States to join in the new Confederacy, might be stricken out when the interest of those States demanded that policy, and when it should have accomplished the purpose which first led to its enactment.

I impugn not the honor of those States—I respect them and the generous sons of the whole South I love—but one of them gives us the reference himself.

I said, that I was for the restoration of harmony and of peace; but, sir, if peace cannot be obtained upon honorable terms to the State; if her rights shall not be fully recognized and established, I shall be willing, not only to go with Virginia, but to lead her to her duty. But before I will agree to do so, I will see that those measures which the Legislature inaugurated and adopted by, I believe, an almost unanimous vote, have failed to meet the ends for which they were designed. I allude to the resolutions inaugurating the "Peace Congress," now in session in the City of Washington. I am willing to await the action of that Conference, and I say that I am looking with anxious interest that something may be done to restore harmony; and if that can be accomplished, I will hail it as a glorious event; I will rejoice at it, and will give it my entire and willing sanction. But it must be no cobweb affair, it must not, sir, to use the language employed on the other side of the House, it must not be peace, peace, when there is no peace. Whatever measure of adjustment may be determined upon, must

be a measure in which the North shall not only say "we are ready to give you a measure embodying a constitutional pledge that this subject of slavery shall not be agitated again in Congress;" but they must speak through their President. We want something more than a declaration of that sort. We want that man, who is to be installed in a few days President of the United States, to come up to his duty and to tell the country that, though he was elected upon the principles of the Chicago platform, yet, that these principles must be abandoned in his administration. I admit, that it is difficult for a man, under such circumstances as he finds himself placed in, to declare in advance what he intends to do. There is not a man among us who, if he were elected to such a position, upon certain principles, would, before he was inaugurated, abandon those principles and say to the world that he was wrong in the avowal of them. Men may change their views of policy and avow it at any time—but the head of a mere sectional party must see that such principles as it has must overthrow the Government and subvert the Constitution—Mr. Lincoln may then be brought to see the danger when he gets into the position to which a part of the nation has called him—for an election, more sectional in its character, was never had in any State or country—if he had the magnanimity to declare, "I believe this Union cannot be preserved—I will surrender here now all those principles embodied in the Chicago platform, which look to interference with slavery in any way whatever—I will proclaim now, as President of the United States, inaugurated as I am and having taken an oath to support the Constitution, that I will not only see that that Constitution is supported and maintained to the last, but I will here lay down the weapons of my rebellion against it." I say if he had the magnanimity to make this proclamation, he would immortalize and render himself the greatest benefactor of the age. Sir, I cannot, I dare not expect such a concession as this. But, I say, sir, that there are men who have sacrificed themselves for the good of their country; there have been men in our own land and in other countries, who have sacrificed all that was dear to them for the sake of that country which gave them birth; that country which is the land that holds everything that is near and dear to us—that land the glories of which my name shall never be identified in dimming under the force of any circumstances whatever. I might say, sir, with some degree of certainty that there are men now in this Union who, if elected upon such principles as those upon which Mr. Lincoln has ridden into power, would be magnanimous and brave enough to make this sacrifice. I don't say that he would do it; I fear he will not; but, sir, whatever he may do, and however he may act, it is our

duty here so to act as to avoid undue precipitancy, and not to impair the force and great moral weight of our action when it is presented to the consideration of the people for ratification or rejection.

In the remarks which I submitted yesterday, and in the resolutions which I then took occasion to submit, I referred to the fact that there was another remedy which could be resorted to, if circumstances had not so changed as to make an amendment to the Constitution impracticable now, in the mode indicated, by an appeal through the State Legislatures under the Constitution itself. I don't see now, sir, that we can get any such measure; I don't desire it. I do not say that under all circumstances we ought to have a ~~an~~ assemblage or a conference of the border States. I indicated it as my wish and desire, if we could have it without compromising the rights and interests of the State of Virginia. I do not wish this Convention, however, to understand me as desiring, by the expression of any such wish or sentiment, delay on their part, in whatever action they contemplate taking. ~~But~~ <sup>^</sup> if I were satisfied that anything would be introduced here that promised to establish peace and equality, and to restore us the rights which our fathers gave us, I should not then have regarded it as a duty which we owed to ourselves and our constituents, to resort to the other means which I indicated, namely: a conference of the border slave States. And then it would be our duty to await the result before proceeding to take any precipitate action. This mode only contemplated a conference of the border slave States—in order that they might act together. I contemplated no Middle Confederacy of slave and free States—but my object was to act together in the border slave States—to consult, to advise, to act together, if we could, and then to take our position.

But, sir, in the meantime, if resistance should become necessary, if it so happened that the State of Virginia should be invaded; that her rights should be crippled in any way; that any attempt should be made to coerce or overawe her by marching Federal troops through the State—any attempt to coerce the seceding States—any attempt to force obedience to the decrees sent forth to subdue them—I say, sir, should these things be attempted, I will, <sup>and</sup> by you, sir, (referring to Mr. Chambliss, near him,) and stand by you to the last.

I shall never depart in the slightest degree from the exact line of that path of propriety and necessity which shall be presented to me. But I say, that before we move, we must be satisfied that the remedies which we have devised, or shall devise, for the evils which now afflict us, have been first exhausted. I must say to my people, when I return home, that there were no possible means of effecting any thing within our reach to which

we had not resorted; that all the measures we had tried had proved unavailing; that we had endeavored by every means to accomplish what might result in the preservation of this Union; but these having proved fruitless, we were compelled to take the ultimatum of dissolution, trusting by-and-by to the prospect of reconstructing it. I would state to my people, in this connection, that in resorting to a Southern Conference of border slave States, I would, in some degree, be governed by the prospect of being enabled to bring our influence to bear, through that medium upon the Southern Confederacy, upon the States that have already seceded, in the hope of again bringing them back and forming a union upon the old basis, with additional guarantees, of course, for our safety, and with perfect security for our rights. When it comes to the question of North or South alone; when I am to choose my position and decide for Virginia, whether she will take her stand with the North or the South—I tell you that my sympathies will be with the South; and that feeling which was born in me, and which I share in common with the people of Virginia, will place me under that flag which is now floating over us to-day. If perish I must, I had rather die fighting gloriously under it, than to die ingloriously, to be wrapped and buried under the folds of one with even thirty-four stars upon it.

This, sir, is my position, and I intend to maintain it, come what may. I say most distinctly and unequivocally that, so far as I am concerned, I have little hope from Abraham Lincoln and his coadjutors. If I had faith that he would inaugurate anything like just principles, which would form a basis for the settlement of this question, I should be willing to forego any action until the test was applied; but there is no hope of such a result. He told us the other day from that consecrated spot in Philadelphia—Independence Hall—that he was “elected upon the principles of that statement in the Declaration of Independence which gives liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but to the people of the world for all future time—those principles which give promise that in due time the weight would be lifted from the shoulders of all men.” Do you tell me that I can go to Washington and feel that I can breathe the air which I once breathed in all its purity; that I can go there and take by the hand the man who says that these principles must be carried out throughout the land—the man who is to be installed into the highest office upon principles that give liberty not only to the white race, but to the slaves of the white man—the slaves which the Constitution recognizes as such? He tells me, these are principles at which nobody can take offence; and he tells you that he means what he says. In view of all this, while I might hope that he might do otherwise, while I might wish he would do otherwise, I can have but

little hope and no expectation that he will. Indeed, I almost entirely despair of his doing so; but there are instances in which men have sacrificed themselves in order to save their country. It is indeed a rare occurrence to find one in a position so exalted, and with so much power and patronage to dispense, turning his back upon the very platform of principles upon which he was elected, and upon the men who placed him in power, hanging around him and waiting for their reward. When I find such a man, I shall indeed find one who has, at least, the consciousness of endeavoring to do his duty. When I find Mr. Lincoln turning upon those who are polluted with the sentiments of that irrepressible conflict doctrine; when he can so far forget the behests of party as to shake off whatever partakes of the fanaticism which belongs to the Garrison, the Phillips, and the Greeley school, then, indeed, I will regard him as having the good of his country at heart, and as exhibiting some disposition to reconcile the distracted elements of the country and bring peace to its people. I have no hope that he will do this, remembering, as I must, that he is obliged to carry out the behests of the party by whom he was elevated to power, rather than consult the interests of the country over which he is now called to preside. Should he do anything to give peace to the country, he would, indeed, deserve the thanks of all men, and he might well feel, as might the country, that he was worthy to be one of the successors of Washington, Jefferson, and the other distinguished men who have filled the Presidential Chair.

I have said what I intended to say, and I return you, Mr. President, and gentlemen of the Convention, my thanks for the patient manner in which you have heard the remarks which I have offered, and for the kind consideration which you manifested in adjourning over, last evening, to enable me to proceed with my remarks to day. I will conclude, now, with the expression of a hope that whatever we may do may redound to the glory of our own State and the benefit of the country at large















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